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Military justice revisions offered

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon has proposed significant changes to how troops are tried and sentenced, two years after a comprehensive review of the military justice system was ordered by then-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel in the wake of persistent sexual assault controversies.

The changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice are the first proposed by the Pentagon in 30 years, after years of Congress mandating change, and would also make the system more transparent to public view.

The Senate Armed Services Committee is expected to be briefed on the proposed guidelines in the next few weeks.

For decades, the military's unique sentencing procedures have required untrained military jurors to decide guilt or innocence as well as impose sentences upon conviction. In most military crimes, there were no minimum sentences, and legally allowed maximum punishment could include life in prison. Under the Pentagon proposal, military judges in all cases would decide sentences based on U.S. Department of Justice guidelines.

Judges always have decided sentences in bench trials.

Moreover, a number of crimes that have been tried under the catch-all Article 134 would be set out independently, perhaps with articles being added to the UCMJ. That means prosecutors would no longer have to prove that a crime such as kidnapping was service-discrediting.

Under the changes, all convicted servicemembers also would have the right to appeal, and military court documents such as judicial rulings — now accessible to the public only through Freedom of Informa-

tion Act requests — would be filed in a public system as they are in federal courts.

"In federal court, anybody may look up a case and view pleadings in current cases. The military trial courts should have a similar system where the public could view motions," said Kyle Fischer, a former Army lawyer now in private practice.

Fischer said the move would benefit not just the public but also people he said are falsely accused.

"Nobody knows about those frivolous cases except for the client, the panel, the attorneys in the case, and the military judge," he said. "If we are going to raise awareness of problem of the falsely accused being tried on frivolous charges, then allowing the press access to these proceedings should be a concern."

The changes make sense and are long overdue, experts said.

"There's a lot of good stuff in this [proposal]," said retired Air Force top prosecutor Don Christensen, now president of Protect Our Defenders, the sexual assault victim advocacy group. "But the fact is that we lived with this insane sentencing process for so many years and the generals never said it made no sense."

Christensen said the proposal was an effort to abort even more sweeping changes, in particular stripping the chain of command from its prosecutorial and judicial role in the military justice system.

The proposed guidelines would still leave military commanders to determine which cases go to court-martial, what charges will be brought against a defendant, whether to cut a deal, and whether to grant clemency after conviction.

"[The Defense Department] didn't want this," Christensen said of the proposed guidelines.

"It's a smoke screen, forced on them by Hagel."

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., has been a vocal opponent of the current system. She has criticized the Pentagon review for not considering whether trained military prosecutors should replace commanders in deciding how to dispose of cases. Prosecutors have more expertise and less bias than commanders, according to her and other critics of the current system.

Military sentencing reform has been proposed for decades, in part because the current system allows for widely varying sentences.

"A panel can come in very high or very low," said Army Reserve lawyer Maj. Joseph Wilkerson, a former editor of the Army Lawyer and the Military Law Review who serves on the defense team of one of the Guantanamo detainees.

Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, for instance, is facing a misconduct-before-the-enemy charge that carries a maximum life sentence. But he also could go unpunished.

The only crimes that carried minimum sentences were murder, death of an unborn baby and spying. In addition, Congress in 2014 mandated punitive discharge as a minimum sentence for penetrative sexual assault.

Lack of sentencing guidelines can create chaos, critics say. Military juries have felt burdened by the lack of sentencing guidelines, Christensen said, and sometimes asked for guidance. But none could be given.

"You'd have three guys get together and go shoplifting or abuse cough medicine — exactly the same history," Christensen said. "One gets two years, one gets a month and the other guy gets restricted to base."

Disparate sentences aren't solely due to military jury sen-

tencing; commanders' decisions also play a role. In a 2011 case in which a soldier was sexually assaulted, three defendants — two soldiers and a Navy petty officer — were tried on a variety of charges stemming from the assault, and they received significantly different sentences. One soldier, tried at general court-martial, received a sentence of 11 months and a bad-conduct discharge. The other got a three-year sentence and a dishonorable discharge.

The petty officer, though equally culpable according to the facts of the case, was tried at a lesser, summary court-martial, in part because the victim already had gone through two courts-martial and declined to participate in a third. His sentence was 30 days of restriction.

The Army Court of Criminal Appeals in 2013 declined to reduce the sentence of the first soldier, who had argued it was unfair his sentence was higher than the petty officer's. "Simply put, (the petty officer) was able to negotiate a more favorable pretrial agreement with his convening authority than appellant was able to with his," the court opinion said, and there had been no "miscarriage of justice or an abuse of discretion."

Other military sentencing deficiencies are not addressed in the Pentagon's proposal, Christensen said.

Unlike in the civilian system, in which sentencing comes after a pause, along with a presentencing report giving a full picture of a guilty defendant, military sentences are handed down immediately after guilty verdicts. "There's such a rush to get it done," he said. "The leadership would rather have a case done quickly than done right."

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Pope recalls victims of terrorism

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis tempered his Easter Sunday message of Christian hope with a denunciation of “blind” terrorism, recalling victims of attacks in Europe, Africa and elsewhere, as well as expressing dismay that people fleeing war or poverty are denied welcome as European countries squabble.

Tens of thousands of people endured long lines, backpack inspections and metal-detecting checks Sunday to enter St. Peter’s Square. Under a brilliant sun, they listened to Francis deliver the traditional noon Easter speech from the central balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica. To their delight, Francis completed a whirl through the square, made colorful with sprays of tulips and other spring flowers, in his open-topped popemobile after celebrating Mass on the steps of the basilica. He leaned over barriers to shake hands with his bodyguards jogging alongside.

In Jerusalem, the cavernous Holy Sepulcher church — where Christians believe Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected — was packed with worshippers commemorating the day they believe Jesus was resurrected some 2,000 years ago.

For years, Islamist extremists on social media have listed the Vatican and Rome as potential targets due to hosting the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church and several basilicas. Despite the threats, Francis has kept to his habit of trying to be in close physical contact with ordinary people.

Francis said, for the faithful, Jesus, who rose after death by crucifixion, “triumphed over evil and sin.” He expressed hope that “will draw us closer to the victims of terrorism, that blind and brutal form of violence.”

Francis also decried the destruction and “contempt for humanitarian law” in Syria.

Navy captain gets 46 months in ‘Fat Leonard’ bribery case

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The highest-ranking U.S. Navy officer convicted so far in a widespread Asian bribery scandal was sentenced in U.S. District Court in San Diego on Friday to 46 months in prison.

Capt. Daniel Dusek was also ordered to pay a \$70,000 fine and \$30,000 in restitution.

Dusek, 49, pleaded guilty to conspiracy of bribery on Jan. 15, 2015, in a case involving the trade of military secrets to an Asian defense contractor in exchange for access to prostitutes, luxury hotel suites and other perks.

Two sailors have already received prison terms in the scheme, headed by Singapore-based businessman Leonard Francis, referred to as “Fat Leonard” by Navy officials.

Before being sentenced, Dusek told the judge, “I will hold this guilt in my heart for the rest of my life,” according to The Associated Press.

U.S. District Judge Janis L. Sammartino was unmoved, telling Dusek that his actions “potentially jeopardized na-

tional security.”

“It’s truly unimaginable to the court that someone in your position with the United States Navy would sell out based on what was provided to you — hotel rooms, entertainment and the services of prostitutes,” the judge said.

U.S. Attorney Laura Duffy said in a statement that it was “a fitting sentence” for a man considered so valuable by his conspirators that they’d dubbed him their “Golden Asset.”

“Captain Dusek’s betrayal is the most distressing because the Navy placed so much trust, power and authority in his hands,” she said.

Dusek, who was ordered to report to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons on June 15, has been free on bond and serving desk duty at Naval Base Coronado, San Diego. The Pentagon declined to comment on Dusek’s conviction, referring all inquiries to the Justice Department. Naval Base Coronado did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In a plea agreement, Dusek admitted using his influence — first as deputy director of

operations for the 7th Fleet, headquartered in Yokosuka, Japan, and then as commanding officer of the USS Bonhomme Richard and the executive officer of the USS Essex — to help Francis and his company, Glenn Defense Marine Asia. Francis would routinely overcharge the Navy for services and supplies.

Francis furnished Dusek with extravagant meals, liquor, gifts, prostitutes and fully paid luxury hotel suites. In exchange, Dusek personally delivered and emailed Navy ship schedules to Francis and his employees on numerous occasions.

He directed Navy ships to the company’s port terminals and, in one case, steered the entire USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Group to a port terminal owned by Francis in Malaysia.

Ten people have been charged in connection with the case, nine of whom have pleaded guilty.

Dusek’s attorney, Douglas Applegate, said in court Friday that there “are probably close to 200 officers still being investigated,” Bloomberg reported.

Report: US to send F-35s to Japan next year

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The U.S. is planning to send F-35 stealth fighters to Japan next year, according to a Japanese media report.

Plans are to deploy the jets in January to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Sean Stackley announced at a House Armed Service Committee hearing Wednesday.

“Marine pilots love this plane and the capability it brings to the air-ground task force,” Stackley said.

Japan is one of eight countries jointly developing the high-tech fighter, which has become America’s most costly weapon, with a price tag of \$1 trillion over the next four decades.

Japan’s Air Self-Defense Force plans to acquire 42 F-35s. Stackley told the committee that the first of those jets is expected to roll off the assembly line in November.

U.S. Forces Japan spokesman Lt. Col. Kenneth Hoffman said in an email Friday that the deployment of the aircraft would not proceed without an authorization from the Japanese

government.

The Marine Corps will eventually replace all of its F/A-18 Hornet jets stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni with F-35B Lightning IIs, Hoffman said.

“The Government of Japan is aware that the U.S. intends to replace the F-18 with the F-35 in the future. The specific timeframe for this replacement remains to be determined,” he said.

The effort to exchange aircraft will take place in close coordination with the government of Japan, Hoffman said.

Villanova knocks off Kansas

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Villanova players danced and celebrated after pulling off what many thought would be the NCAA Tournament's most difficult task.

Beating Kansas, the No. 1 overall seed, required taking the Jayhawks out of their comfort zone while seizing the opportunities that resulted. The Wildcats did both effectively even though it wasn't always pretty, and their reward is a berth in the Final Four.

Kris Jenkins made two free throws with 13.3 seconds remaining, Jalen Brunson added two more with 3.5 seconds left and second-seeded Villanova upset the top-seeded Jayhawks 64-59 on Saturday night in the South Region final. The Wildcats will play Oklahoma next weekend in Houston.

Mikal Bridges and Josh Hart each made big steals in the final minute to help the Wildcats (33-5) pull off the upset and end the Jayhawks' 17-game winning streak. The Wildcats are back in the Final Four for the first time since 2009, and they can credit balanced scoring and ferocious defense.

Jenkins, Hart and Ryan Arcidiacono each scored 13 points for the Wildcats. They used a 10-0 run to take a 50-45 lead and get key baskets and plays down the stretch in beating the Jayhawks (33-5).

"Every guy on this team is willing to do whatever it takes to win, man," said Jenkins, who made all six free throws to offset 3-for-10 shooting. "Everybody on this team sacrifices. But we're not satis-

fied. We're looking forward to our next game in Houston. This definitely is a special feeling but like I said before, we're not satisfied."

Devonte' Graham had 17 points, and Frank Mason III and Wayne Selden Jr. added 16 each for Kansas, which got just four points from leading scorer Perry Ellis. The Jayhawks shot 46 percent from the field and even won the rebounding battle 32-28, but played from behind most of the night.

Even when it was ahead, Kansas never seemed in control and ended up making desperation plays that didn't work.

Graham made 5 of 9 from long range but fouled out late, and everyone else was a combined 1-for-13 from behind the arc. Kansas also committed 16 turnovers, including several in the final minutes when it was within a possession of tying or leading.

"I think the basket shrunk a little bit for us, and certainly, they probably got some confidence the way they were defending us," Kansas coach Bill Self said about Villanova. "But it came down them making free throws and it came down to a couple of loose balls, and that was the difference in the outcome."

Villanova got 10 points from Daniel Ochefu, including a big jumper with 6:14 left, just one of many big plays the Wildcats made to preserve the lead after finally wresting it from Kansas.

It wasn't easy. Mason scored five points and the Jayhawks cut it to 60-59 with

15 seconds left. But Arcidiacono, who turned 22, preceded that with four free throws before Jenkins and Brunson followed with two more. The Wildcats made 18 of 19 at the line and all eight in the final 33 seconds.

The Wildcats were also given the ball with 34 seconds left when officials determined that Graham undercut Hart on a scramble after Graham's turnover. Graham fouled out at that point, and Mason's foul led to the first of Arcidiacono's foul shots.

Darryl Reynolds had two free throws and Bridges had a key tip-in for the Wildcats as well in a game in which they shot 40 percent from the field.

Villanova gets to pursue its second national title in its fifth Final Four berth, though the NCAA vacated its 1971 appearance because star Howard Porter had signed a pro contract while still in college. The Wildcats will face Oklahoma next Saturday in Houston.

More importantly, the Wildcats did what no team had been able to over two months and really wasn't expected to in knocking out the tournament favorite. But both teams had been ranked No. 1 this season and have been winning even bigger in the tournament.

This Elite Eight matchup seemed inevitable as a result, with Villanova coach Jay Wright comparing it to a heavyweight bout in Friday. The Wildcats ended up cutting off the court with a zone defense and mixing in timely offense.

Hield, OU too much for Ducks

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Oregon won a school-record 31 games while claiming the Pac-12 regular-season and tournament titles. The Ducks were a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament for the first time, and they advanced confidently to the brink of their first Final Four since 1939.

And then they met Buddy Hield. Oklahoma's star scorer hit eight three-pointers while dropping 37 points on the Ducks, leading the Sooners past Oregon 80-68 on Saturday to end the Ducks' remarkable season.

Elgin Cook scored 24 points for the Ducks (31-7), whose 11-game winning streak ended one game shy of the second Final Four in school history. With Hield hitting one dramatic shot after another, Oregon fell behind by 18 points in the first half and couldn't get back in it despite the combined efforts of a deep, balanced roster.

"No one expected it," Cook said. "We were confident. We believed in each other, but this hurts a lot."

Oregon had beaten six NCAA Tournament-bound teams by double digits during its winning streak, but Oklahoma's outside shooting and rebounding led to a first-half hole that was too deep for the Pac-12 champions. Hield had the highest-scoring performance against the Ducks all season.

Hield scored 17 points in the first half, capped by drilling his fifth three-pointer from three steps behind the line with 4 seconds left to put the Sooners up 48-30 at the break, matching Oregon's biggest halftime deficit of the season.

He hit two more huge three-pointers down the stretch, including a graceful, high-arching shot with 4:20 to play that pushed Oklahoma's lead back to 17 points. Cook played solid defense for long stretches against Hield, but the Ducks could only watch and wonder as he carved up their defense from all distances with his smooth outside shot and a knack for momentum-swinging buckets.

"I thought he had a phenomenal game," Oregon coach Dana Altman said. "And every time I felt like we were getting ready to do something, he would jump up and make a shot."

Jordan Woodard added 13 points for the Sooners (29-7), who are in the Final Four for the fifth time in school history. The regional final was a monument to the formidable talent of Hield, the Sooners' senior star who passed on NBA riches for another chance to reach the Final Four.

Even Kobe Bryant watched admiringly from the stands, prompting some Oregon players to compare Hield to the Lakers' retiring superstar.

Dillon Brooks, the Ducks' leading scorer in the past two games, managed just seven points before fouling out.

"Buddy Hield just willed them to a win," Brooks said. "We had a poor first half. We dug ourselves a huge hole. We were down 18, and we were fighting in the second half, but we couldn't get it back."

UConn women rout Mississippi State

Associated Press

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. — Breanna Stewart and the UConn Huskies took notice of the major upsets Friday night. They needed just four minutes to put to rest any notion of that happening to them.

Stewart had 22 points, 14 rebounds and five blocks to lead No. 1 UConn to a 98-38 record rout of fifth-seeded Mississippi State on Saturday.

"Crazy things happen in March," Stewart said. "We wanted to make sure when we came out today that wasn't going to happen with us."

It hasn't in quite some time.

The win was the 72nd straight for UConn (35-0) and left the Huskies three victories shy of an unprecedented fourth consecutive national championship. Their road to that historic title got a bit easier Friday night when top seeds South Carolina and Notre Dame both lost in the Sweet 16.

"It was an awakening for our players and everyone else," coach Geno Auriemma said. "If you show up in March and don't bring your 'A' game and your guys aren't focused and locked in and playing their best basketball, that this can happen."

The best team in the nation put together one of its most dominant games during this run, quickly quashing any thoughts of the Bulldogs pulling off the upset with a dominant start.

The victory supplanted the record 51-point win the Huskies had over Texas in the regional semifinals last year that set the NCAA record for margin of victory in the regional rounds and beyond.

Even Auriemma was impressed with the effort. "I told them during one timeout, and I never do this, I said, man you guys are really good," Auriemma admitted. "I was just caught up in it all. The timeouts on Monday might be completely different."

Oregon State 83, DePaul 71: At Dallas, Jamie Weisner had career highs with 38 points and seven three-pointers and Oregon State advanced to its first women's regional final.

Weisner also had 10 rebounds for the Pac-12 champion Beavers (31-4), the No. 2 seed in the Dallas Regional. They will play top-

seeded Baylor (36-1) Monday night with a Final Four berth on the line.

Sydney Wiese added 13 points for Oregon State, including consecutive early three-pointers right before the Beavers went ahead to stay. Ruth Hamblin also scored 13 points.

DePaul (27-9) was in its fourth Sweet 16 under 30-year coach Doug Bruno, but has never gotten farther in the tournament.

Jessica January had 20 points for sixth-seeded DePaul, while Jacqui Grant had 15 and Mart'e Grays 14.

Baylor 78, Florida 58: Nina Davis scored 30 points and Baylor is going to the Elite Eight for the third straight year.

The Lady Bears (36-1), the No. 1 seed in the Dallas Regional, went ahead to stay with a 15-3 run to end the first quarter after an early flurry of turnovers led to frustrated coach Kim Mulkey calling timeout.

Alexis Jones added 15 points, nine rebounds and five assists for Baylor, which has a 23-game winning streak. Khadijah Cave had 10 rebounds.

Leticia Romero had 11 points for fifth-seeded Florida State (25-8), which made consecutive Sweet 16 appearances for the first time in school history. Ivey Slaughter, Shakayla Thomas and Brittany Brown each had 10 points.

Texas 72, UCLA 64: Imani Boyette scored 18 points and grabbed 10 rebounds to lead second-seeded Texas to a come-from-behind win.

Brooke McCarty added 15 points for the Longhorns (31-4), who will play in their first regional final since 2003.

Monique Billings scored 20 points and grabbed 12 rebounds for UCLA, which finishes its season at 26-9. Jordyn Canada also had 20 points for the third-seeded Bruins.

UCLA led by 10 points in the second quarter, five points at the half and 54-48 after three quarters.

But Texas scored the first 10 points of the fourth to take the lead for good. Texas' Ariel Atkins made a three-point play, hitting a shot as she falling down in the lane while being fouled, to push the lead to 63-56 and the Longhorns hit their free throws down the stretch.



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Thunder cruise past Spurs

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Thunder didn't face the San Antonio Spurs' biggest stars, but they'll take the win.

Kevin Durant scored 31 points and Russell Westbrook added 29 to help the Thunder defeat the short-handed Spurs 111-92 on Saturday night.

It wasn't the late-season showdown that was anticipated when the schedule first came out — the Spurs rested Kawhi Leonard, LaMarcus Aldridge, Tim Duncan, Manu Ginobili and Tony Parker.

The game also had little effect on the standings. San Antonio is likely to finish second in the Western Conference and the Thunder are virtually locked into third. But the Thunder, who won their seventh straight, said it was important to maintain momentum.

"Another opportunity for us to keep growing and building our habits," Durant said. "It wasn't on us that they didn't play their starters. We just had to continue to play our game and do what we do."

Enes Kanter had 20 points and 10 rebounds, and Serge Ibaka added 15 points and eight rebounds for Oklahoma City.

David West and Jonathon Simmons each scored 17 points for the Spurs, who had won eight of nine. Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said he thought his team played hard, but didn't have the talent available to keep up.

"They did what they were supposed to do in the end and they kicked our butt," Popovich said. "We hung in there really well and did a good job. You learn from everything. Win or lose, it doesn't matter."

Westbrook scored 20 points in the first half to help the Thunder take a 48-44 lead into the break.

Andre Roberson hit a three-pointer, then Westbrook rebounded a missed free throw and found Steven Adams running down the middle of the lane for a dunk. Westbrook then set Ibaka up for a dunk to push Oklahoma City's lead to 69-56.

Westbrook uncorked a powerful one-handed jam to bump Oklahoma City's lead to 74-59 late in the third quarter.

Durant scored nine points in the period to help the Thunder take an 83-63 edge into the fourth.

"I think it was that little spurt in the moment that we didn't make stops, and they made tough shots, and at the same time, we didn't score," Spurs forward Boris Diaw said.

The Spurs didn't want to make excuses.

"I mean, we are professional, so we are going to give the effort," West said. "When you are down a few guys like we are in a game like this against a high-caliber opponent, you almost have to be mistake free to give yourself a chance."

Cavaliers 107, Knicks 93: LeBron James had 27 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists in his third triple-double of the season, Kevin Love added 28 points and 12 rebounds, and visiting Cleveland Cavaliers beat the New York Knicks 107-93 on Saturday night.

James also picked up a technical foul when he stared at Amundson after driving to the rim and ferociously dunking over the Knicks forward and Kristaps Porzingis.

Even with Kyrie Irving resting, the Cavaliers easily bounced back from a loss in Brooklyn on Thursday, shutting the Knicks down in the first half.

Smith finished with 13 points in the Cavs' sixth straight victory over the Knicks.

Carmelo Anthony scored 28 points after a brutal start for the Knicks, who were coming off a home-and-home sweep of Chicago. Porzingis had 19.

James recorded his 42nd career triple-double and moved within three points of Dominique Wilkins for 12th place on the NBA's scoring list.

Raptors 115, Pelicans 91: DeMar DeRozan scored 23 points, Patrick Patterson had 16 and visiting Toronto snapped a two-game losing streak to tie a franchise record with their 49th victory of the season.

Hawks 112, Pistons 95: Paul Millsap had 23 points and nine rebounds, and visiting Atlanta snapped Detroit's five-game winning streak.

The Hawks have won 13 of their last 16 and moved a game ahead of Miami atop the Southeast Division.

Nets 120, Pacers 110: Brook Lopez scored 23 points, Bojan Bogdanovic added 18, and host Brooklyn beat Indiana Sergej Karasev added a career-high 17 points for the Nets, who took a 104-102 lead on Bogdanovic's three-pointer with 5:41 remaining in the game. Lopez then scored nine consecutive points for Brooklyn before Bogdanovic nailed a contested three-pointer to put Brooklyn ahead 116-110 with 39 seconds remaining.

Magic 111, Bulls 89: Orlando journeyman center Dewayne Dedmon scored a career-high 18 points and grabbed 13 rebounds, Jason Smith added 14 off the bench and the host Magic dealt Chicago a blow to their fading playoff hopes.

Elfrid Payton scored 15 points and had 10 assists and Evan Fournier added 12 points for the Magic, who snapped a six-game skid.

Jazz 93, Timberwolves 84: Gordon Hayward scored 16 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter the road-weary Utah finished a five-game road trip with a victory.

Hornets 115, Bucks 91: Nicolas Batum scored 23 of his 25 points in the first half and the visiting Hornets used a three-point barrage to rout Milwaukee.

Marvin Williams added 21 points and Kemba Walker had 18 for the Hornets, who won three of four games in the season series.

Celtics 102, Suns 99: Isaiah Thomas scored 28 points against his former team, and visiting Boston held off Phoenix despite almost blowing a 21-point lead.

Evan Turner added 17 points, 15 of those in the first half, to go with 11 rebounds for Boston, which won its fourth straight. He also blocked the potential tying shot with 3.9 seconds left.

Trail Blazers 108, 76ers 105: C.J. McCollum converted a three-point play with 7.6 seconds left to break a tie and lift host Portland past the Philadelphia.

Krzyzewski apologizes for postgame chat

Associated Press

DURHAM, N.C. — Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski says he has apologized to Oregon coach Dana Altman for his postgame conversation with Dillon Brooks.

In a statement issued Saturday, Krzyzewski said "it is not my place to talk to another team's player" and he hoped he "did not create a distraction" for the top-seeded Ducks.

Oregon lost to Oklahoma 80-68 on Saturday night in the West Regional final of the NCAA Tournament.

Brooks hit a long three-pointer with the shot clock expiring in the final seconds of the Ducks' 82-68 victory over Duke on Thursday night. In the handshake line, Krzyzewski had a prolonged discussion with the Oregon guard — and video of it immediately went viral.

In the statement, Krzyzewski said that chat "took the focus away from the terrific game that Dillon played."

Altman dismissed Krzyzewski's concerns after the Ducks' loss to Oklahoma.

"He called and apologized, and I told him he didn't need to," Altman said. "Someone that has accomplished what he has accomplished and makes a comment to one of my players is perfectly fine with me, and it didn't bother me at all. It bothered a lot of people. It didn't bother me. It didn't bother Dillon, and Dillon's response proved that."

In the locker room after Thursday's game, Brooks said that Krzyzewski told him "I'm too good of a player to be showing [off] at the end."

In his ensuing news conference, Krzyzewski disputed Brooks' version of events and appeared angry when it was brought up.

"I didn't say that," Krzyzewski said. "You can say whatever you want. Dillon Brooks is a hell of a player. I said, 'You're a terrific player.' And you can take whatever he said and go with it, all right?"

Blues blank Caps, extend shutout streak to 4

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Jake Allen watched from the bench as fellow goaltender Brian Elliott put together three consecutive shutouts for the St. Louis Blues. Jealousy didn't set in, but Allen wanted his chance, too.

He got it Saturday night and kept the streak going. Allen stopped all 32 shots he faced, and the Blues beat the NHL-leading Washington Capitals 4-0 for their franchise-record fourth shutout in a row.

St. Louis is the 11th team to post four consecutive shutouts, a testament to team defense but also the goaltending of Elliott and Allen.

"It can be tough a little bit because (Allen has) been watching lately, and obviously (Elliott) has been playing unbelievable," Blues forward Paul Stastny said. "It's that internal competition that sometimes can be bad for you and sometimes can be good. These guys have found a way to make it competitive on a good standpoint that benefits the team."

The Blues left Elliott back in St. Louis to rest after he shut out the Vancouver Canucks on Friday. Coach Ken Hitchcock said Elliott will be back in net Tuesday against the Colorado Avalanche, who are

fighting to keep their playoff hopes alive.

Thanks to stellar goaltending, the Blues have already clinched a playoff spot and can now set their sights on the Central Division and the top seed in the Western Conference. The victory against the Capitals improved St. Louis to 10-2 in its past 12 games and allowed the team to keep pace with the Dallas Stars atop the division.

Washington missed its first chance to clinch the Presidents' Trophy and home-ice advantage throughout the playoffs. The Capitals needed just a point to wrap that up but will have to wait until Monday when they host the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Panthers 5, Lightning 2: Jaromir Jagr had a goal and an assist while Roberto Luongo made 33 saves as Florida took over first place in the Atlantic Division by beating host Tampa Bay.

Vincent Trocheck, Jiri Hudler, Jonathan Huberdeau and Jussi Jokinen also scored for the Panthers, who have a two-point lead over the Lightning.

Tampa Bay got goals from Tyler Johnson and Steven Stamkos.

Penguins 7, Red Wings 2: Carl Hagelin scored twice and Phil Kessel had a goal and four assists to help Pittsburgh rout

visiting Detroit.

Stars 4, Sharks 2: Mattias Janmark returned to the lineup from injury and got his first career two-goal game while Antti Niemi made 34 saves against his former team as Dallas beat host San Jose.

Ducks 4, Senators 3 (OT): Rickard Rakell scored a power-play goal in overtime as Anaheim finished with four straight goals to beat host Ottawa.

Islanders 4, Hurricanes 3 (OT): Cal Clutterbuck scored a deflected goal with 13.8 seconds left in overtime as visiting New York beat Carolina.

Clutterbuck had two goals, with his first tying it 30 seconds into the third period.

Bruins 3, Maple Leafs 1: Zdeno Chara snapped a 20-game goal drought as Boston ended a season-long five-game losing streak with a victory over host Toronto.

The win created some much-needed space in the Eastern Conference playoff race for Boston, currently third in the Atlantic Division with 88 points and now three points up on Detroit.

Wild 4, Avalanche 0: Zach Parise scored twice and Devan Dubnyk made 29 saves for his 19th NHL shutout as Minnesota beat host Colorado in a pivotal game between two teams contending

for the final Western Conference playoff spot.

Rangers 5, Canadiens 2: Chris Kreider had two goals and an assist as New York beat host Montreal.

Predators 5, Blue Jackets 1: Shea Weber and James Neal each had a goal and an assist to lead Nashville over visiting Columbus.

Sabres 3, Jets 2: Sam Reinhart tied the game and then set up Jack Eichel's go-ahead goal 4:07 into the third period, rallying host Buffalo over Winnipeg.

The loss mathematically eliminated the Jets from playoff contention in a matchup of teams out of the postseason picture.

Blackhawks 4, Flames 1: Andrew Ladd had two goals and an assist and Scott Darling made 31 saves to lead visiting Chicago over Calgary.

Kings 6, Oilers 4: Tyler Toffoli had two goals and two assists while Trevor Lewis added a short-handed goal as host Los Angeles completed a five-game season sweep of Edmonton.

Coyotes 2, Flyers 1: Shane Doan and Mike Stone scored in the final 4½ minutes of the second period while Mike Smith made 34 saves as host Arizona beat Philadelphia.